

Anna: You're listening to *Changing Minds: Transformative Talks for Healthcare Improvement*. Grab a coffee or tea and join our team as we chat with leaders in the academic detailing space. For more information on academic detailing, visit us at narcad.org.

Anna: Welcome back to *Changing Minds*. I'm your host, Anna Morgan-Barsamian. Today, I'm joined by my wonderful colleague, the Deputy Director of NaRCAD, Bevin Amira.

Hi, Bevin. Welcome. Thanks for being on the show today.

Bevin: Hey, Anna. Thank you for having me. I'm so excited about all of the things we're planning on tackling today. So yeah, happy to be here.

Anna: Awesome. Before we dive in, I have some exciting news to share with all of our listeners. I'll be heading out on maternity leave starting in May, and during that time, Bevin will be stepping in as the *Changing Minds* podcast host. She'll be guiding you through the next 6 months of conversations while I'm away, and I couldn't be happier to leave you in such great hands.

Bevin: Thank you, Anna. Big shoes to fill for sure. You have effectively birthed a child. You have another child coming, and you've also birthed the *Changing Minds* podcast over the past year, plus really leading such incredible conversations, thinking about how academic detailing can be such a critical strategy, especially now, which kind of leads a little bit into what we're going to talk about. But why don't you cover what we're going to tackle today, and then we'll dive in.

Anna: Yeah, we have so much to cover today. We have challenging things to discuss, as well as a really exciting event coming up. We'll share a special code for 50% off of that event at the end of this podcast, so please do stick around. But let's dive in, Bevin.

Bevin: Let's do it. Where do you want to start?

Anna: We've seen funding cuts across major agencies like SAMHSA, the VA, CDC. How do we talk about these challenges in a way that validates the struggle, but also highlights the resilience of our detailing community?

Bevin: Yeah, that's a great question. And I think the important thing, first and foremost, is to talk about the struggle. Being Pollyannaish right now, trying to be toxically positive isn't helping anyone. And at NaRCAD, we're such realists. We really want to let our community know, we see you struggling. We see the healthcare landscape just being ravaged by some of these cuts to federal funding.

Everyone knows the CDC has faced drastic cuts, which is directly affecting so many of our public health detailers who really rely on that funding coming down through their state and local public health departments. So that's been really difficult. Also finding out as of this week that the current administration is formulating plans to cut a third of the federal health budget from here on out, which will really have a continued impact on public health departments.

So that's been really, really difficult. And it's been important for us to connect with our public health detailing colleagues and tell them that we are there for them, that we're there to put our heads together and try to find ways to keep doing the important work amidst these funding challenges.

I think looking at some of our other esteemed colleagues, especially over at the VA, I know just last year before this administration took over, the VA was working really hard to fill over 60,000 vacancies, really just so understaffed.

They care for more than 9 million veterans and their health. And now just less than a year later, the administration is talking about cutting another 80,000 jobs by August. And so that's really impacting so many veteran patients out there.

We're thinking about that ripple effect here at NaRCAD, and we're really thinking about what we can do to help and find ways to be both realistic and keep people's hope and faith alive. And it's a challenging time to do that.

Anna: It definitely is and it's difficult to be realistic and also uplifting at the same time. In a time when misinformation is being shared, even by sources like the Department of Health and Human Services, how do we continue to ground ourselves and the clinicians we support in evidence? And by we, I mean detailers and detailing programs.

Bevin: Yeah, it's really important right now to get back to that core anchor of academic detailing that says that evidence leads the way hand in hand with relationship building.

And it's really problematic right now to deal with the fact that the head of HHS, Secretary Kennedy Jr., is sharing some dangerous mistruths rather than leading with facts, data, and evidence, which is the way that we need to go. We know that his beliefs are being touted as truths, especially around things like saying that autism is a disease and that it's preventable and that it is similar to COVID-19, that it's due to environmental exposure. And these are things without evidence.

Likening a condition like autism to a chronic disease or an infectious disease is just irresponsible. It just really stigmatizes and stereotypes folks with autism. And at the same time, spreading misinformation, it really does cause damage, especially around things like COVID-19, which the Secretary likened to essentially a bad cold that only affected the older adult population, which we know at an evidence-based medical center like NaRCAD, is just absolutely false.

And so your question about what do we do when misinformation is being shared and people are believing it because it's coming from people who are in positions of power, the important thing for us is to just keep going back to trusted sources of evidence. And at this time, the head of HHS is not a trusted source of evidence. And we all in detailing know how to find good evidence, how to do rigorous evidence reviews.

Our job as detailers, and I say that as a non-detailer, but I feel like a we, and I know you do too, Anna, just being cheerleaders and a community center and a hub for all of the incredible detailers out there, that the detailers out there really need to know their jobs are more important than ever. That making sure that clinicians have what they need during this time to educate patients on trusted evidence, that's got to be an anchor we come back to like a compass. So that's what we have to keep doing. And that's a big part of what our summit event will be focused on in late June, June 25th and 26th. And we'll talk more about that a little bit.

Anna: Thanks, Bevin. You mentioned that it's more critical than ever to return to the foundational principles of AD. Can you talk a little bit more about that specifically? What are those principles we need to return to? I heard you say evidence. We need to return to the evidence.

Are there other principles that we should be returning to and thinking about as well?

Bevin: Yes, absolutely. So one thing about why it's more critical than ever to uphold academic detailing is because we know it works. Talk about evidence. We have 40 years of evidence and reviews that show that academic detailing as a one-to-one communication strategy, wherein a trained public health or health educator goes right into a clinic and speaks to a clinician, a frontline clinician in his, her, or their own practice environment, and really has an in-depth one-to-one conversation. We know it works so much more effectively than a lecture, an online module, you know, any other traditional CME trainings. And it's because of the relationship.

You know, the evidence is so key, but the relationship building is just as critical. And I know that folks listening who might not know a whole lot about AD might, you know, kind of say, oh, I've never heard of this. We know in our community that having conversations with people, getting to know their humanity, getting to know the struggles they deal with on a day-to-day basis, whether they're clinicians, they're patients, they're support staff, in any of those cases, it's about understanding what's getting in the way of better care and how can evidence and tools and resources really arm those frontline clinicians to provide the best, most efficient care that they possibly can.

So we know it works. We know that from Jerry Avorn's original studies in the early eighties, that it's effective and impactful, and it really, really gets back to building relationships, which is so particularly critical in this time.

Anna: I'll put the literature that you mentioned into the show notes so that folks can review that as well. Just in case you want to take a deeper dive into it.

Bevin: Yeah, please do. Anyone can also jump on narcad.org, check out our lit archives and all the great stuff we have. It just shows that evidence and relationship building is a dynamic duo that really helps affect positive change.

Anna: I want to shift gears and talk a little bit more about our detailing community specifically. What have you seen change most in how detailers show up in the face of uncertainty during this time and any time of uncertainty, especially in moments when funding or institutional support feels really shaky?

Bevin: That's a great question, Anna, and I know you may have some thoughts on that too, but I know that at NaRCAD, since January and really since last fall, we've seen people respond in different ways. And there's one layer that's just sheer panic, right? What's going to happen to these programs I care so much about? We have colleagues over in, in all different parts of the states, but thinking of some special colleagues at the DISH-AZ program whose funding was cut around gender expansive care, and just, it's heartbreaking that the work we need to be doing is hitting roadblocks that are just not based on a need. It's based on control.

And so what we need to do, I think, is encourage detailers, many of whom are trying to show up with their game faces on, right? Trying to show up with energy, but are starting to burnout or maybe dealing with long-term burnout, and hear them and listen to them and give them that space. And so those of you who are listening right now who are struggling, we are here. If you want to hop on a call with myself or Anna or any members of our team and just tell us what's going on for you and the impact, we're very much here for that.

And I think that's where relationship building comes in yet again, such a key way to build community. The flip side of seeing folks panic and feel really weighed down by the pressures and the funding cuts and the uncertainty that you mentioned, Anna, is a lot of folks have been banding together. A lot of folks, and that's what's so wonderful about community in general, but in particular, our community here at NaRCAD and all the great people who get up every day and know, hey, if I've still got a job to do around educating clinicians about the best evidence-based care, I'm going to do it. I'm going to do my best. These folks are banding together, whether it's through our Peer Connection Program where folks are connected one-to-one and have these partnerships to really talk about what's going on and ease some stress and blow off steam. That's a critical way to band together.

And so, again, it's about the evidence and about relationship building, but it's about accepting what's going on and not pooh-poohing it. And I think that's something that we at NaRCAD really want to just reiterate, that it's not a time to pick yourself up by your bootstraps and act like this is normal. It's a very, very unprecedented time. The only thing that's precedent is how often people are saying it's unprecedented is what I would say.

Anna: Agreed. Yeah. And community is more important than ever at this time as well. So we talked about evidence, the relationships, but also the AD community needs to be together.

Bevin: That's absolutely right. So I want to turn it back to you, Anna. You are such a mover and shaker within our community and you run the Peer Connection Program. What I want to ask you is how can people connect with the AD community when they're feeling particularly disconnected or overwhelmed or just downtrodden during this time? What are some ways that we're there for them and what can they do to get that support they need?

Anna: This is such an important question and one that I think resonates a lot with folks in the AD space as we've discussed, especially for those working on small teams or one person teams where they may feel isolated.

So I would say when you're feeling disconnected or overwhelmed, the first thing to remember is you're not alone, right? This work is deeply meaningful, but it can also be very demanding. One of the best ways to reconnect is by leaning into the community that we have here at NaRCAD that already exists. I would say that the AD community is one of the most generous and welcoming groups of public health professionals out there.

So start by reaching out to our team at NaRCAD, as Bevin mentioned, or attend one of our Community Check-Ins, join a training, sign up for a coaching session, attend one of our Summits or Conferences, or reach out to an AD colleague that you've met along the way. If you're interested in connecting to someone in the AD community doing similar work as you, but you don't know where to start, who to connect with, our team at NaRCAD can absolutely connect you to one of your peers. And you would be surprised at how many people are ready to respond with encouragement, ideas, and shared experiences. Don't underestimate the power of that peer support.

I would say another great way to plug in when you're feeling overwhelmed is through storytelling. So either listening to others share their journeys, or sharing your own stories on platforms like this podcast, or our DETAILS blog, or our virtual events can help us feel seen and heard, and remind us why we're here doing this work in the first place.

If you're feeling overwhelmed, take a breath, reach out, and let the community remind you that you're part of something way bigger, and that we're here to cheer you on.

Bevin: And we really mean that. This is not, you know, us filling space, or trying to emulate who we want to be. We really are a community who cares, and you really can email me, Anna, anyone directly, and say, “I don’t even know where to start, I’m so overwhelmed.” And let us jump in, let us hop on the phone with you. I can’t underscore enough what Anna said about what a welcoming community this is.

So if you haven’t tapped in yet, you’re missing out, and let us connect you. Let us be that person at the cocktail party that says, “oh, you’ve got to meet this person over here, I’ve been dying to connect you to”, because that’s very much who and how we are. And if you’re a person who is more introverted right now, you’re overwhelmed by connection, you’re feeling like you need to go into your turtle shell, I want to reiterate what Anna said about checking out other podcasts or blogs, and just seeing what other people have to share, and doing that kind of in a self-study way, on your own, at your own pace.

And above and beyond, you know, it really never hurts to say, take care of yourselves. Do things for yourself that help you reconnect with a sense of joy and purpose and your values, especially during a time where things are just so all over the place. It’s really important not just to root ourselves in evidence and relationship building for our work, but in what is real and true and meaningful for us as human beings. And you’re always a human being first before your job. So we just want to remind you of that here at NaRCAD, that taking a breather to take care of yourself, it’s not just a self-care, hashtag self-care trend, it’s something you need to do to really make sure that that you’re going to be okay.

Anna: Yeah, thanks, Bevin. I have one more question for you as we wrap up. As we think about the future of detailing, the future of the field, what gives you hope? What reminds you that this work still matters, maybe now more than ever?

Bevin: That’s a great question, Anna, and I have kind of an odd answer to it perhaps, but what gives me hope is the degree of anger that I’m seeing come from people, a sense of righteous anger, and the real reason that I feel hopeful about that is it means that, you know, anger is protective, and when folks in our community are dismayed and outraged by what’s going on, and then they take that anger and fuel it back into purpose-driven work, into getting back in touch with the meaning of their work, that’s a sign that we’re still kicking, that we haven’t given in, that we’re still alive and alert and aware and awake.

It’s just a matter of what to do with that excess energy and how we can kind of channel it for good. I’ll just reiterate what we both spoke about is seeing people band together right now is incredibly uplifting. So, I think it’s people allowing themselves and each other to be exactly where they’re at, to be indignant and outraged, and then also, okay, I got that out of my system, what can I do? That’s something I really admire about our community and about the larger community. When you think about just the ways in which public citizens are really just kind of coming together to support the truth and the evidence of science and of evidence-based medicine, it’s really heartening during a time that would otherwise be disheartening.

So whenever you see, you know, kind of a flash of passion about something, at least for me, that gives me hope. I’d love to know what, you know, turn this question back to you. What makes you feel like our work still matters now more than ever or gives you a sense of, okay, we can get through this?

Anna: What gives me hope is the people, the detailers. Every time I meet a new detailer who’s just starting out or I hear someone in the field talk about how a single conversation they had with a clinician shifted a clinician’s perspective, I’m reminded that this work absolutely still

matters. It's those small human moments when someone feels seen and heard and when a patient ends up getting better care because of a conversation that a detailer had. I love that.

What I find hope in as we look to the future of detailing, what really gives me hope is how adaptable and equity-driven this community is becoming. We're not just delivering information anymore. We're listening. We're responding and tailoring all of our approaches to meet people where they are. I see more programs centering the patient voice, engaging communities directly, embracing harm reduction and anti-stigma work and cultural stability. That shift and that intention is so, so powerful.

We're also watching detailing evolve beyond the walls of just primary care. So programs have been partnering with libraries, faith communities, and community health workers - that kind of community-based expansion is really a game changer.

It reminds me that detailing is more than a job. It's really, it's a movement. At the end of the day, what gives me hope is the community of passionate, thoughtful detailers who keep showing up, who keep innovating, and who believe that one conversation can make all the difference.

Bevin: Because it can. I love everything you said there, Anna, and that made me also feel more hopeful just in hearing you talk about that. And just to say quickly, our community is so strong.

They're not going to fall over easily. And I see so many people redoubling their efforts to talk about inclusion. You know, in a time where it's, oh, are we allowed to talk about this? It's like, yeah, we're going to talk about this. We're going to talk about what the evidence says. We should be talking about what the evidence points to. And I just loved what you said when it comes down to that granular level, that one conversation can make or change how a patient receives care. And that's why we're doing this work. So yeah, thank you for that.

Anna: And for our listeners, if you want to continue this conversation with us, we invite you to join us at our upcoming Summit on June 25th and 26th. We'll be focusing on the importance of community, of how we're evolving based on the landscape, the current landscape that we're living in. So we are giving all of our listeners 50% off your ticket registration. You just need to use CHANGINGMINDS, one word, all caps as the promo code when you're registering and you will get 50% off.

Bevin, is there anything else you want to add about the upcoming AD summit?

Bevin: I'd love to. This is our third annual Summit and it's all virtual, so you don't need to hop on a plane. You can just hop on over to your computer or your iPad.

And I do want to kind of promote the title, which Anna came up with this first chunk of, I love it so much. It's called "The Power of 'WE': Building Solutions & Stability Together." And this year we're going to be highlighting the critical importance of bringing the best evidence to frontline clinicians who are depending on us now more than ever.

we're just so excited. Anna and I have had a sneak peek at the agenda, which is now public facing. It's up on the web. So check us out at narcad.org. You can click on our events menu dropdown, click on the AD summit and join us.

If any of you of our podcast listeners want to use our 50% off code, we may reach out and ask you what you think about the podcast and what other topics you'd like to hear us explore.

Anna: Awesome. We hope to see you at our Summit and thank you for being here today as we worked through some challenges that we're all facing, Bevin. We really appreciate you on the podcast and thank you for running with the podcast for the next 6 months while I step out.

Bevin: I'll do my best. You'll have to tell me what you think in December, 2025. But in the meantime, if folks are excited about the podcast and you can auditorily envision yourself on the podcast, chatting with me, pop me an email at bevin.amira@bmc.org. Let me know what you'd like to talk about and we'll see if we can make something happen. Thanks so much, Anna. Thanks for such a wonderful first year of *Changing Minds*. Cheers to you and good luck with your new baby.

Anna: Thanks, Bevin!